Final edition

JFK files—two big questions

WASHINGTON (AP) —The FBI has opened its files on the assassination of President John F. Kennedy but this so far has not closed the case on two 14-year-old questions:

Did Lee Harvey Oswald murder the President on his own? And if so, why?

A preliminary reading of the files, released yesterday, does not refute the Warren Commission conclusion that Oswald acted independently.

What does emerge from the 40,001 pages from the FBI's records—another 40,000 are to be released in January—is a sharpened picture of the frantic days following Kennedy's murder in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963.

They show that:

• Within two hours of the President's death, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover believed the crime was committed by Oswald, whom he called "a mean-minded individual . . . in the category of a nut."

• Almost as quickly, bureau agents began a hunt of unprecedented magnitude, running down thousands of leads ranging from reports of a Castro-inspired plot to threatening graffiti on lavatory walls.

Hoover's battle with the Warren Commission
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FLOOD OF TIPS

Hoover presided over the investigation, urging speed yet thoroughness by his agents.

The half-ton of files gave a vivid portrait of a nation suddenly gone mad. Hundreds — thousands — of Americans said they had seen or talked with Oswald in almost every port of the country.

CASTRO SUSPECT

Agents doggedly ran down all such leads. All too often they ended in a blind—not infrequently, a blind drunk—alley.

More serious paths led toward Fidel Castro, Communist leader of Cuba. The FBI obtained a letter from Havana to Oswald mentioning money payments and Oswald's ability to shoot out a candle at 50 meters.

The letter was dated Nov. 10, 1963, but was postmarked six days after the assassination. The FBI decided it was the work of a crank. But Hoover wrote at the time "as to whether he (Oswald) was the only man gives me great concern."

QUOTES AT SCENE

As to a connection between Oswald and Ruby the FBI director said in the same letter that "while I think there was no connection . . . I did not want the report to be 100 per cent sure on that."

The files disclose no major discrepancies with the Warren Commission report, which drew extensively from them. But they contain harrowing vignettes.

Mrs. John B. Connally, a passenger in the death car whose husband, the Texas governor, was seriously wounded, thought the auto was hit by buckshot. Then she realized it was brain matter.

"They've killed Jack," cried Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy, the President's wife. "His brains are in my hand."

HIS LAST WORDS

Moments before the second of two shots hit him, the President said: "Get me to a hospital," his last words.

The worry that Oswald might have had accomplices also troubled Hoover who wrote his aides Dec. 12, 1963:

"I personally believe Oswald was the assssin; that the second aspect as to whether he was the only man gives me great concern."